

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12950

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CB, TH

SUBJ: SMUGGLERS EXECUTED

1. CONCLUDING ITS INVESTIGATION OF SMUGGLING INTO AND OUT OF CAMBODIA, THE RTG SUMMARILY EXECUTED THREE PERSONS IN ARANYA-PRATHET UNDER ARTICLE 21 ON MORNING OF JUNE 14. ONE WAS CHARGED WITH HAVING PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN BRINGING IN KC TO ATTACK THREE THAI VILLAGES JAN 28, WHEREAS THE OTHER TWO WERE ACCUSED OF HAVING ACTED AS SPIES FOR THE KC BY SUPPLYING INFORMATION ON MILITARY MOVEMENTS IN THAILAND. A FOURTH SUSPECT, A 15-YEAR OLD YOUTH, WAS ALSO FOUND GUILTY OF THE LATTER OFFENSE BUT HAD HIS SENTENCE COMMUTED TO FIVE YEARS IMPRISONMENT DUE TO HIS AGE AND HIS COOPERATIVENESS IN SUPPLYING USEFUL TESTIMONY. THE SAME ORDER SENTENCED THREE MERCHANTS TO TERMS RANGING FROM 20 YEARS TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR SMUGGLING STRATEGIC COMMODITIES INTO CAMBODIA; IT ACQUITTED THIRTEEN OTHERS.

2. JOURNALISTS TRYING TO ASCERTAIN FACTS SUPPORTING THE INDICTMENTS TOLD EMBOFF THAT THESE ARE FAR FROM CLEAR. THEY SAID THAT TWO OF THE THREE CULPRITS WERE CHINESE MERCHANTS AND A THIRD A CAMBODIAN LIVING IN THAILAND, ALL THREE BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING. JOURNALISTS SAID THAT THE RTG HAS NOT LAID OUT THE FACTS AS TO DEGREE THESE OR OTHERS WERE INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING STRATEGIC GOODS RATHER THAN MERELY GASOLINE OR RICE. RTG SEEMS TO BE CONVINCED THAT IT WAS THE TREACHERY OF THE THREE (PLUS THE YOUTH) WHICH HELPED THE KC MAKE THEIR BLOODY ATTACKS ON JAN 28.

3. THRUST OF REPORTING WHICH LOCAL NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT IS APPARENTLY FILING ALLEGEDLY CLAIMS THE EXECUTIONS ARE A SLAP IN THE FACE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. IF A LINK BETWEEN THE THREE AND THE JAN 28 ATTACKS HAS INDEED BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE THAI ARE LIKELY TO CONSIDER THAT TO BE OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE.
WHITEHOUSE

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